

**REMARKS**

By this Amendment, claims 1 and 4-7 are amended with respect to independent claim 1, as amended, Applicants respectfully submit that U.S. Patent No. 3,212,632 to *Baum et al.* ("*Baum*") does not teach or suggest at least "nails are connected to each other by the connecting bands located at positions abutting an upper end and a lower end of each of said shaft portions." In contrast, the connecting bands in the cited art are separated from the upper end and a lower end of each of the shaft portions of the nails. Therefore, Applicants respectfully submit that the amended claims put the application in form for allowance.

Further, it is noted that the heads of the stick-type connected nails, in the present invention, contact the connecting bands located at the upper end of the neighboring stick-type connected nails and the lower end portions of the stick-type connected nails contact the connecting bands located at the lower end of the neighboring stick-type connected nails so there is no possibility that the neighboring connected nails become entangled when plural sheets of connected nails are loaded in a multiple loading type nail magazine in a superposed manner. Thus, nail feeding can be smoothly performed without entangling the connected nails. This is not disclosed in any of the cited references.

Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that the rejections under 35 U.S.C. §§ 102(b) and 103(a) be withdrawn.

Applicants respectfully submit that no new matter has been introduced by this Preliminary Amendment which is being made to place the application in better condition for examination. Accordingly, claims 1-8 are pending for examination.

If there is any fee due in connection with the filing of this Preliminary Amendment,  
please charge the fees to our Deposit Account No. 50-0310.

Respectfully submitted,

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